

ISEM 301 Great Issues – Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

1 credit P/F Spring Semester 2013

Rodney Frey 885-6268 rfrey@uidaho.edu

CRN# 68213

Instructors/Presenters: **Larry Forney** (Director of the Institute for Bioinformatics and Evolutionary Studies; Professor of Biology), **Rodney Frey** (Director of General Education; Professor of Ethnography), **Heather Gasser** (Director of the Women’s Center), **Rochelle Smith** (Reference Librarian), **David “Sonny” Lacks** (son of Henrietta) and **Gary Williams** (Chair of the Department of English; Professor of English). All participants are confirmed. Five-seven graduate teaching assistants will also be involved, given enrollment in this ISEM 301.

Seminar Description: This seminar is being linked to the University’s Common Read, with accompanying presentations by the son of Henrietta Lacks and other scholars. The seminar will explore the life story and legacy of Henrietta Lacks. It is the story of a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells, scientifically known as HeLa, were taken without Henrietta’s knowledge in 1951, while undergoing cancer treatment. These cells have become one of the most important tools in modern medicine. Henrietta Lacks’ story intersects medical and scientific research--including development of the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, with biomedical ethics, doctor-patient relations and a patient’s right to informed consent--with racial and gender prejudice and economic disparity, with access to quality health care, and with a journalist’s own professional and personal quests of discovery and growth as a human being as a journalist engages with and relates to her informants – the descendents of Henrietta Lacks. It is the story of humanizing what was dehumanized, of putting a human story on HeLa cells. The seminar will bring together a variety of themes that will allow students to gain a deeper appreciation of the interconnections of today’s social and economic diversity, scientific and medical research, and associated ethical issues.

Seminar Learning Objectives: The seminar learning objectives are linked with the specific themes of this seminar, with the general ISEM 301 focus criteria, and with the University Learning Outcomes, and seek to facilitate in the student an increased competency to:

1. **Understand** the history of medical research and bioethics related to the HeLa cells. Understand the diverse social and economic, racial and gender contexts within which Henrietta Lacks lived and died. Understand the themes of this seminar. Appreciate the legacy and implications of these medical, ethical and social understandings on today’s society.

University Learning Outcome 1 – Learn and integrate. *Through independent learning and collaborative study, attain, use, and develop knowledge in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences, with disciplinary specialization and the ability to integrate information across disciplines.*

2. **Identify**, understand and discuss current, real-world issues.

University Learning Outcome 2 – Think and create. *Use multiple thinking strategies to examine real-world issues, explore creative avenues of expression, solve problems, and make consequential decisions*

3. **Distinguish** and **integrate** differing forms of knowledge and academic disciplinary approaches (e.g., humanities and sciences) with that of the student's own academic discipline (e.g., in agriculture, architecture, art, business, economics, education, engineering, natural resources, etc.). And apply a **multidisciplinary strategy** to address current, real-world issues.

University Learning Outcomes 1 – Learn and integrate. *Through independent learning and collaborative study, attain, use, and develop knowledge in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences, with disciplinary specialization and the ability to integrate information across disciplines, and 2 – Think and create.* *Use multiple thinking strategies to examine real-world issues, explore creative avenues of expression, solve problems, and make consequential decisions.*

4. Improve oral and written **communication** skills.

University Learning Outcome 3 – Communicate. *Acquire, articulate, create and convey intended meaning using verbal and non-verbal method of communication that demonstrates respect and understanding in a complex society.*

5. Explore an appreciation of the **self** in relation to its larger diverse social and academic contexts.

University Learning Outcome 4 – Clarify purpose and perspective. *Explore one's life purpose and meaning through transformational experiences that foster an understanding of self, relationships, and diverse global perspectives.*

6. Apply principles of **ethics** and **respect** in interaction with others.

University Learning Outcome 5 – Practice citizenship. *Apply principles of ethical leadership, collaborative engagement, socially responsible behavior, respect for diversity in an interdependent world, and a service-oriented commitment to advance and sustain local and global communities.*

Seminar Themes (to be reframed as current issues, dilemmas or challenges)

Medical and scientific research

Medical and scientific bioethics and informed consent
 Race, class and gender
 Poverty
 Civility and citizenship
 Understanding the self and one's discipline in a diverse social context
 Applying a multidisciplinary approach, e.g., humanities, natural science and social science, to address a current issue, e.g., understanding and communicating scientific (STEM) knowledge and education

Learning Activities: Each of the four learning activities is linked to the seminar themes and learning objectives, as well as to the University Learning Outcomes.

- A. **Text Reading:** *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. Broadway Paperbacks: New York, 2010.
- B. **Attendance and Participation in Workshops:** Attendance required at all sessions, with participation in the last two sessions. All eight sessions Tuesday evenings, 7:00 to 9:00.
 1. **January 15 at 7:00 pm Location: Renfrew 111.** Led by **Rodney Frey**, provide seminar orientation, meet graduate teaching assistants and assign discussion seminar groups (of 30 students each). Break-off into seminar groups and go to separate rooms to review syllabus, learning objectives and activities (seminar participating, discussion and reflective paper requirements), the grading criteria, and study guide questions with the graduate assistant. Students will familiarize themselves with their seminar group and graduate assistant. **Seminar Locations at 8:00 pm: TLC 147, TLC 148, TLC 149, TLC 222**
 2. **January 22 at 7:00 pm Location: Ballroom of SUB. Keynote Address** by David Jr. "Sonny" Lacks, son of Henrietta Lacks (**FREE Open to the general public**)
 3. January 29 at 7:00 pm Location: Renfrew 111. **Gary Williams** – a humanities approach (**FREE Open to the general public**)
 4. February 5 at 7:00 pm Location: Renfrew 111. **Larry Forney** – a scientific approach and bioethical issues (**FREE Open to the general public**)
 5. February 12 at 7:00 pm Location: Renfrew 111. **Heather Gasser** – social science approach and gender and social issues (**FREE Open to the general public**)
 6. February 19 at 7:00 pm Location: Renfrew 111. **Rochelle Smith** – open topic and exploring the library and further research opportunities (**FREE Open to the general public**)

7. February 26 at 7:00 pm Locations: **TLC 147, TLC 148, TLC 149, TLC 222**. Led by graduate teaching assistants, meet in seminar groups to discuss and reflect on the speakers and reading (in context of UI Learning Outcomes and specific ISEM themes, using study guide questions)
 8. March 5 at 7:00 pm Locations: **TLC 147, TLC 148, TLC 149, TLC 222**. Led by graduate teaching assistants, meet in seminar groups to discuss/present each student's reflective paper.
- C. **Seminar Participation**. Each student will have an opportunity to orally articulate and discuss one or more of the seminar themes. The themes will be reframed and presented as a current ethical, scientific, social, or medical dilemma or challenge that needs resolution. The discussion will seek to have each student demonstrate his or her ability to: 1. Convey an understanding of the seminar theme addressed; 2. Distinguish and integrate differing academic disciplines and/or approaches (as presented by speakers and including student's own disciplinary background), along with the student's own academic discipline. 3. Apply that integrated disciplinary approach to addressing the dilemma or challenge posed in the seminar; 4. Identify and reflection on how "the self" is articulated and relates to the larger social context; 5. Effectiveness in oral communications.
- D. **Reflection paper** ("assessment artifact"). Length: Minimum of 10 pages (double-spaced in proper MLA or APA style). The student selects one of the seminar themes and explores its implications and possible resolutions from an integrated yet multiple disciplinary approaches. The student is to demonstrate: 1. An understanding of a key theme as presented in the textbook and by the presenters; 2. An ability to distinguish and understanding multiple academic disciplines, including his or her own; 3. An ability to integrate a multiple disciplines (distinct from and including the student's own) in an appreciation of a current issue; 4. An ability to clarify his or her own self in relation to one of the current issues/themes; 5. And ability to effectively communicate through writing, using and properly referencing at least three library resources (print or digital).

Grading Criteria Rubric - Pass/Fail This rubric is embedded in and applied to the seminar student learning activities (discussions/presentations and the reflective paper). The rubric was derived, with modifications, from VALUE Association of American Colleges and University (found at <http://www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm> or <http://bblearnhelp.uidaho.edu/sample-rubrics.html>). A team, led by the instructor of record and made up of the graduate student assistants, would utilize this rubric to grade the seminar discussions and reflective papers, thus providing a

uniform and systematic means of grading a potentially large number of students using several graders. Scoring scale: average of 3.0 for passing grade.

Learning Objectives:	Minimal (1)	Emerging (2)	Emerging (3)	Competent (4)
1. <u>Understand</u> content	Based upon the themes of the seminar, presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Based upon the themes of the seminar, presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/approaches.	Based upon the themes of the seminar, presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Based upon the themes of the seminar, synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.
2. <u>Identify Issues</u> identifies	Demonstrates a limited ability in identifying a problem statement or related contextual factors.	Begins to demonstrate the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, but problem statement is superficial	Demonstrates the ability to construct a problem statement with evidence of most relevant contextual factors, and problem statement is adequately detailed.	Demonstrates the ability to construct a clear and insightful problem statement with evidence of all relevant contextual factors.
3. <u>Distinguish, Integrate, Address</u> connect self with own academic discipline	When prompted, presents examples, facts, or theories from own field of study or discipline.	When prompted, connects examples, facts, or theories from own field of study or discipline.	Independently connects examples, facts, or theories from own field of study or discipline.	Independently creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from own field of study or discipline
differentiate disciplines	When prompted, presents examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or discipline.	When prompted, connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or discipline.	Independently connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or discipline.	Independently creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or discipline.
integrates disciplines to address issues	Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in own discipline in a new situation.	Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained from multiple disciplines to contribute to understanding of problems or issues.	Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained from multiple disciplines to solve problems or explore issues.	Adapts and applies, independently, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained from multiple disciplines to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.
4. <u>Communicate</u> written	In addressing themes of seminar, uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.	In addressing themes of seminar, uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	In addressing themes of seminar, uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	In addressing themes of seminar, uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.
oral	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make

	to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
sources	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the written and verbal communications.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and in the written and verbal communications.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and in the written and verbal communications.	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and in the written and verbal communications.
5. <u>Self</u>	At a surface level, reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) and the themes of the seminar, without revealing clarified meaning or indicating a broader perspective about educational or life events, and the self.	With some depth, reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) and themes of seminar, revealing slightly clarified meanings or indicating somewhat broader perspectives about educational or life events, and the self.	In depth review of prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) and themes of seminar, revealing fully clarified meanings or indicating broader perspectives about educational or life events, and the self.	In depth review of prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) and themes of seminar to reveal significantly changed perspectives about educational and life experiences, and the self, which provide foundation for expanded knowledge, growth, and maturity over time.
6. <u>Ethics</u> ethics	Student states a position but cannot state the objections to and assumptions and limitations of the different ethical perspectives/concepts.	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts but does not respond to them (and ultimately objections, assumptions, and implications are compartmentalized by student and do not affect student's position.)	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of, and respond to the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, but the student's response is inadequate.	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of and can reasonably defend against the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, and the student's defense is adequate and effective.
respect	Views the experience of others but does so through own cultural worldview.	Identifies components of other cultural perspectives but responds in all situations with own worldview.	Recognizes intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview and sometimes uses more than one worldview in interactions.	Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.